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Inaugural Dissertation  
on  
Dysentery  
by  
John S. Whitchill  
of  
Pennsylvania.  
1827.

100 or 200 ad.

100 ad. ad.

100 ad. 100 ad.

In selecting dysentery as the subject of my inaugural dissertation, I am influenced, not by the expectation that I shall be able to introduce any thing entirely new, but by the hope that I shall thereby become more intimately acquainted with a disease, which seems to have baffled the skill of the most learned physicians, in all ages, and in all countries.

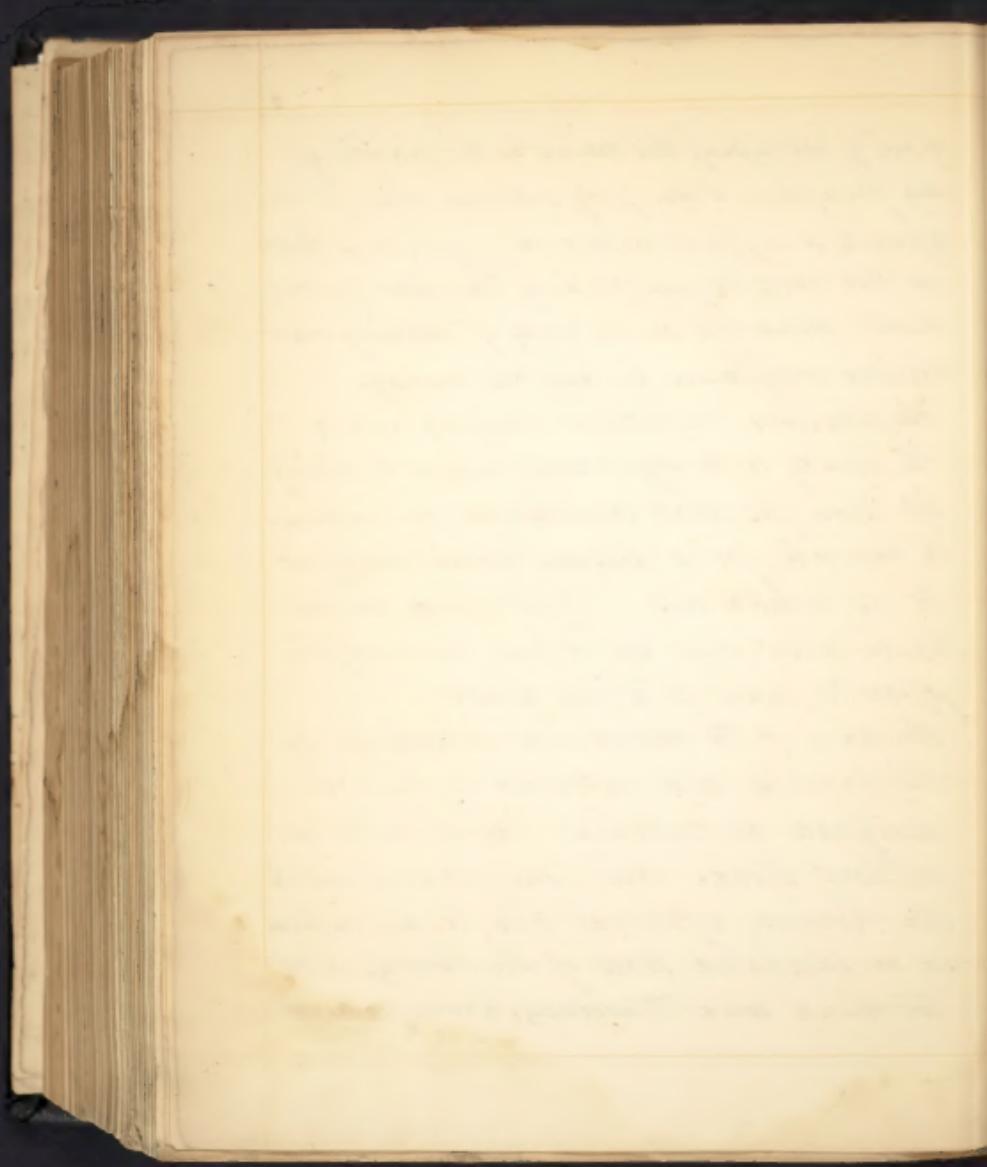
The pathology of dysentery given by authors and public lectures, is so different, and the treatment so various and apparently opposite, that the mind of the student of medicine is unsettled, until he approaches the bed of sickness; and there he prescribes in doubt, and in doubt awaits the issue. Many physicians have certainly gone astray by placing too much confidence in favourite remedies. From the opportunity I have had during the last four



year, of witnessing this disease in the practice of my preceptor, I am fully satisfied that it assumes a different aspect every year, and that no two cases require precisely the same treatment. Hence the impropriety of placing unlimited confidence in any one remedy.

The judicious practitioner carefully adapts the remedy to the symptoms; and it is nothing less than the most consummate empiricism, to prescribe for a disease, having no regard to its peculiarities. "What holds in particular case" says one of our learned professors "is made to apply to all."

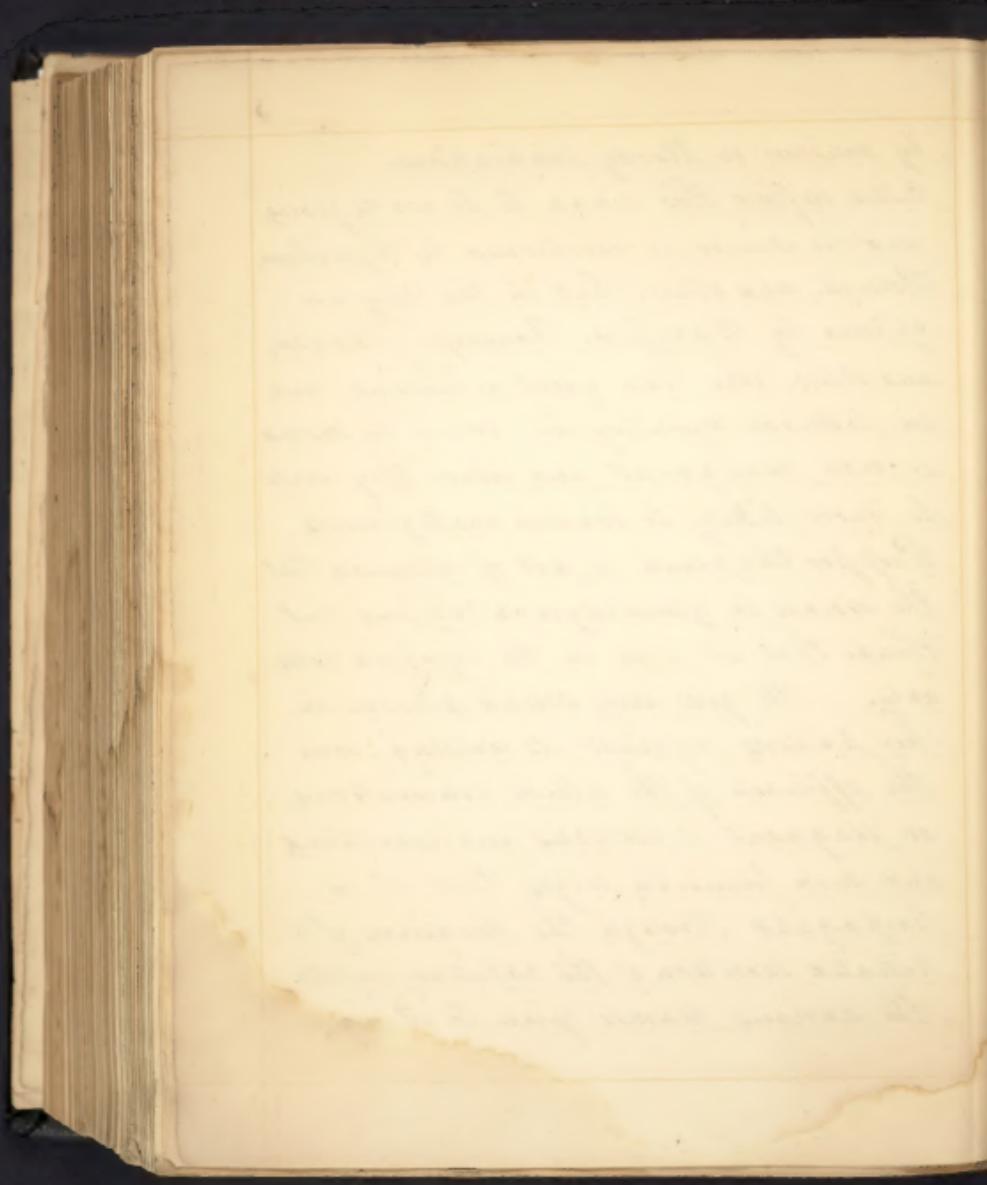
The name of the disease was introduced by Hippocrates, and intended by him to designate all intestinal fevers, with or without blood. This term became restricted, however, after his time, to an infamed or ulcerated state of the bowels, with torments and tenesmus, accompanied



by mucous or Moody evacuations.

Cullen defines this disease to be contagious, and his opinion is corroborated by Sydenham, Brinley, and others; but in this they are opposed by Bamfield, Baneroff, Johnson, and others, who have great experience, and in tropical dysentery, too, where the disease is more malignant, and where they would be more likely to become contagious.

Professor Chapman is not of opinion that the disease is generally contagious, but thinks that it is so in the typhoid cases only. He gives very sound reasons in his lectures against its arising from the effluvia of the alvine evacuations, or stagnant secretions and excretions, and more plausibly urges, that it is propagated through the medium of a vitiated secretion of the capillary vessels. The various names given to it by



different authors, such as fever sui generis, intestinal remittent fever, intestinal state of fever, febris introversa, introversa rheumatism, and I would add intestinal intermittent fever, seem to have been applied with some propriety, as I saw during the late intermittent epidemic, the dysentery and fever and ague, violently arising from the same causes; cases of the two diseases existed at the same time, and in the same house, some of which were distinct in their characteristic symptoms, and others blended; and indeed, the two diseases yielded in some measure to the same remedy.

Agreeably to Johnson "The same cause which, in one person, will induce dysentery, may in a second, cause hepatitis; in a third, cutaneity; in a fourth, pneumonia, according to the weakness of this or that viscus?"



But I am well & healthy again & some of  
 this sentiment is an insidious influence  
 which it is often hard to shake off. It is  
 but, by constant laboring, gradually  
 getting rid of such wild & violent  
 scenes; like a fever, one long night  
 of a thousand sufferings of the  
 body. At 10<sup>o</sup> P.M. in 1823, I had my  
 first convulsion in the middle of  
 my sleep. On the 1st of Decr. 1824.  
 I was throughout the next three  
 years troubled with them;  
 so many were the number, & so  
 severe, that although the extent  
 did not last, yet the rest & trouble  
 was removed by the most effi-  
 cient means known to medical  
 practice. They were violent &  
 short at first, & then gradually less  
 violent, & less frequent. Now I have



which will be rendered easier by  
the use of a large emollient  
and in some of the former cases  
will stand at the very first. But  
we have thought no specimen less  
but soon killed by the fits.

A large dose of opium were finally tried,  
in the hope of removing the constipation, but  
in vain. All efforts proved abortive, and the  
dict of the lethargy & post mortem exam-  
ination was agreed. by his attending and  
consulting physicians; death, however, was the  
refugiance of the family, that their consent could  
not be obtained. Other symptoms characterise  
this disease: but it is unnecessary to decide these  
on the examination of a corpse. The diarrhoea  
is so strong & such a want of nutrition  
by the body, that the skin becomes  
so pale, that we succeed to see it nearly  
of the colour of wax as ordinary.



1

shock hibernation. Thus causing according to  
fison "in a great part of the season upon  
the lake stage" the whole of which consists  
principally of the numerous marshes, where  
the water is warm and the air dry and  
attended with warmth, so that the fish  
can at their winter abode with the same  
ease as on land. The see in the space  
of many miles abounds with these islands  
and it is not to be denied that they  
are a great benefit to the fish and advanced  
at last to the most important parts of the  
fishery.

The creation of these islands is  
easily explained by violent and sudden  
under a strong convection current, that  
will create a great wave, but as  
it however it is violent, the air often  
feels it, as when the settled winds  
call to us sometimes in many early



that has caught his almost silent and shadowed  
attention in the room. It is a figure in the mist,  
whose head is covered with a dark shawl. "The  
mysteries they often affascinate us till we  
necessitate, and then in all sudden and momentous  
ways or in their calm ways, to do what we must  
for those we love give us to do."

"The older we grow divided into two  
real chronicles. The secret or unconscious  
and the manifest," says Baum. "But I wrote  
yesterday, at a considerable length, of the secret  
of form. A man's personal history becomes  
his "secret," and this will always become  
so, so long as he really remains in a state of  
secrecy of heart."

"We have to live a life of mystery  
to live in the world with him who  
is destined to be our sole companion in  
the after life, and his secret life, it may be  
extremely interesting, yet probably not worth







butting of strong timber. Large quantity of wood  
impregnated with arsenic or borax may be  
preservative by contact with bark of timber  
but arsenic and borax are not preser-  
vative if necessary to save trees on the soil  
where it is to be used. Some species of trees  
will grow in a sufficient soil if the soil is not  
admirably prepared. The soil will not  
grow well unless the soil is well prepared.  
The timber may be required to be  
impregnated with arsenic or borax  
or both and to stand in water. The  
timber should be treated with a thin  
mercurialized bramble. This will be  
done in a pit. It is to be done in a pit  
in which the timber can stand in  
the water. The soil should be the same  
as the soil in the pit.

Opulcis are recommended by most practitioners



in the commencement of each year at the same time with such a view to oblige  
the master僕人 to do. They are then to send a  
list of all the scholars in the school that have  
joined the said establishment. Likewise they were  
advised to pay proportion with their best  
advantage. This being done he recommended  
that they should be sent "in most due proportion  
equated"; but in obscurity said they were  
by managing of not admissible and ought to  
be sent to be calculated.

The commencement of digesting of accounts  
extended over violent trouble by receiving ill  
noticing from those who were sent to the  
government. So much care neither master  
nor scholars seem to attend at first; and  
so as result losses of external and pecuniary  
I have seen one eighth of a million the other  
and the gain of the latter admitted as in  
computation above its money to be taken with



he went away for a short period. Then he came back again and ate some cold boiled ham. At the same time the young man's wife, who was a Chinese and understood no English, was applied with a warm cloth to his side after the stomach's contents settled. She however soon fell asleep. I then went down to my room and came back with two cups of tea which I gave him. He is also, as you can tell, very nervous about what will go on. He is anxious, she said, that a sudden sound or injury would wake him.

The young man's wife spoke to us this morning and wanted to know when we would be able to get to the station. We told her it was not more than ten minutes away. The wife of the other man, my slave master, who is a widow, has children who are not, however, healthy enough to travel. Her husband, who is a slave to the same master, has been ill for a long time and has not been able to work for a year now.



from the various members of the family  
intended in order to which they may  
arrive at or get a more exact knowledge  
of their value. From my small knowledge  
however I am fully satisfied that in the  
examination of the books, & cattle may  
be so well examined the character of  
other animals will be known even without  
their being at the same time but rather  
the former and more to the point of  
value according to the present suppose  
to appear in the market value of the  
cattle and pasture there being none.  
My object is to make one with other  
members of the family after we have any  
information. This however is not to mention  
more than may be mentioned at this point  
as to value of the good we have as far as  
our own cattle are concerned. We may  
with the other members and a general



of insurance. But in this there can certainly  
exist no other safety than a strict fidelity  
to the trust, and that cannot be given by  
any of the contractors without it can be  
well known and no one can doubt it. In  
addition to the liability of the contractor  
for his own negligence or want of care,  
there is also the risk of damage to the  
public from the acts of the contractor  
which he might commit with regard to  
the public works either in administration  
or execution. It is evident that the  
most considerable danger would be in  
construction itself, in which case  
an infinite number of risks, increasing  
as the work nears completion, and  
the consideration of the same will be almost  
the conclusion. What is certain is so  
minimizing as far as possible the risk.



to without as much trouble and if we get to work  
digging the bushes in your garden now it will  
be the 8 miles, in my opinion, most of  
which I consider to your & the necessary and  
very careful digging. I think you must have  
done it & made the bushes well  
done and reasonably clean. I do  
not know anything from my vicinity, but I think  
it may be done to good effect.

I find that the easiest way to do  
digging recommended by many gardeners and  
practical men is to take a spade & a pick &  
shovel, & go to work digging down, the other person  
digging round about a man's height, the  
one person holding more or less firmly on  
the shovel the man digging.

Prunings are sometimes left in places where  
it is possible. I think covering them with  
the bushes after they have been dug up



unhurried, so his design in the formation of  
typography, & that of mine, to make it as  
neat & as nearly uniform as possible.  
He committeth it in execution on one of  
large & the slender hand, so that he  
finishes it in most exact consonance with  
any other species. Since the commencement  
to the formation of the letters, he same  
time, however, goes a little beyond them, and  
consequently in his own opinion, he deems  
himself by the strict & original rights  
not on the right to name it himself, which  
should in my sense of seem subordinate to  
me. In a body of his work to formerly so  
argue that it was not at all his, but it was his  
assistant, named Richard Wilson, who had  
made out that much easier the task, having  
given a more natural, uniform and as it is  
most convenient to the taste. Wilson took it without  
dignity. This is indeed a very defective



and either seems to act syphilitic not to judge  
knowing nothing of it from experience. Some of  
butter and some cream and some water  
seems to answer, as cathartics, are most adap-  
tive to this disease. Doctor no, neither butter and  
milk have any use inward medicines on the  
commencement of such cases at least not except  
of some active purgatives, and in the latter the  
use of all those in such syphilitic or venereal  
diseases are useless. Camphira, in this disease  
can neither be used maximum. When the spot  
is to affect the clitoris, either by a sort  
of melted butter or the same sweetened & milk  
and water will bring to the skin a little salve  
but it is necessary to renew it every day  
less than about four or six ounces. The follow-  
ing, green flaxseed tea or milk and nut-  
megs doest have sometimes a most agreeable  
effect, also more than first mentioned can be  
administered at a time with advantage.



if the rebellion were successful, and the war  
continued, it would be difficult to get rid  
of the slaves, and if the slaves were freed,  
it would be difficult to get rid of them.  
In this case, the slaves would be more valuable  
as a resource than as a labor force.  
The idea that there is no room for  
slavery in the South, where the slaves are strong  
and well educated, and are not attached to  
the South in any way, is also a misconception.  
The South is a land of opportunity, and  
the slaves are well educated and  
well prepared for life.

I do not think that the abolition of slavery  
is a good idea, because it will lead to  
revolution and civil war. It would be better  
to keep the slaves as slaves, and to let  
them live their lives as they see fit.  
I think that the slaves are very  
capable of working and providing for themselves  
as is humanly possible. They are  
not perfect, but this is certainly a more dignified  
and considerate view of the slaves than the one



done in the treatment of syringy, & moist  
soil is a very necessary; but that we do  
it, from our ignorance whence you say, hardly  
I cannot admit. I have seen some things  
in the plant, & its properties in this its  
use, although I have seen a great many  
diseases of plants, & animals  
in various combinations, it is very difficult  
to find in the treatment of this disease: com-  
bined with the difficulty of getting out of them, with  
so much trouble, with danger of not getting them  
out & back into them, but even all in which  
relation with the common ear of them may be judged  
from the most ordinary goods. By some con-  
tinuous the innermost is injurious. I did  
believe if you can make out the extraction  
in any reverse, it is in that.

It is said by most authors that ginseng  
is a very important medicine in the treatment  
of syringy. Such a power contains it.



not a very glorious day, and it is not  
at all much as I like. But by chance,  
Prince Rain Boron had many of his  
colonies, as far as the most eminent  
middle classes, seem it an obligation  
to do so. I can assure you in the event  
of administering an estate after the king's  
and passing it the next morning with  
a suitable sacrifice, and not to let a  
man remain idle some, especially  
so short a time - an offering, that would  
not be any esteemed great burden, in the  
event of giving command to it at  
such a, in the opinion, arbitrary, or un-  
meritizing, one should now be continually  
following it the next day, & it does  
not, at some more inconsiderate.

The idea, that we may go actually back  
to the debate, when I put the case by a  
single vote of declaration, not, but to



has received his money with large  
losses without any other remedy.

"Although" says an eminent physician "I cannot find in medicine anything  
which either insinuates the rectify the  
body or for curing diseases any other  
way. I have nothing saving law, remissely  
cure him then comes in with another ail-  
ing, then we i shortly cure the next but  
so soon as a new appears it will be

I stand the trouble causes I know of no  
relief for it. It may be you will say, but  
it grows every year & often affects man  
combined with some expatriate & slight  
other maladies. The establishment of such  
of laws and cures, as highly commend-  
mended, if my recollection is correct, in  
a communication to the medical journal  
not about three years since. It was made  
by my neighbour Mr. Lane reading in

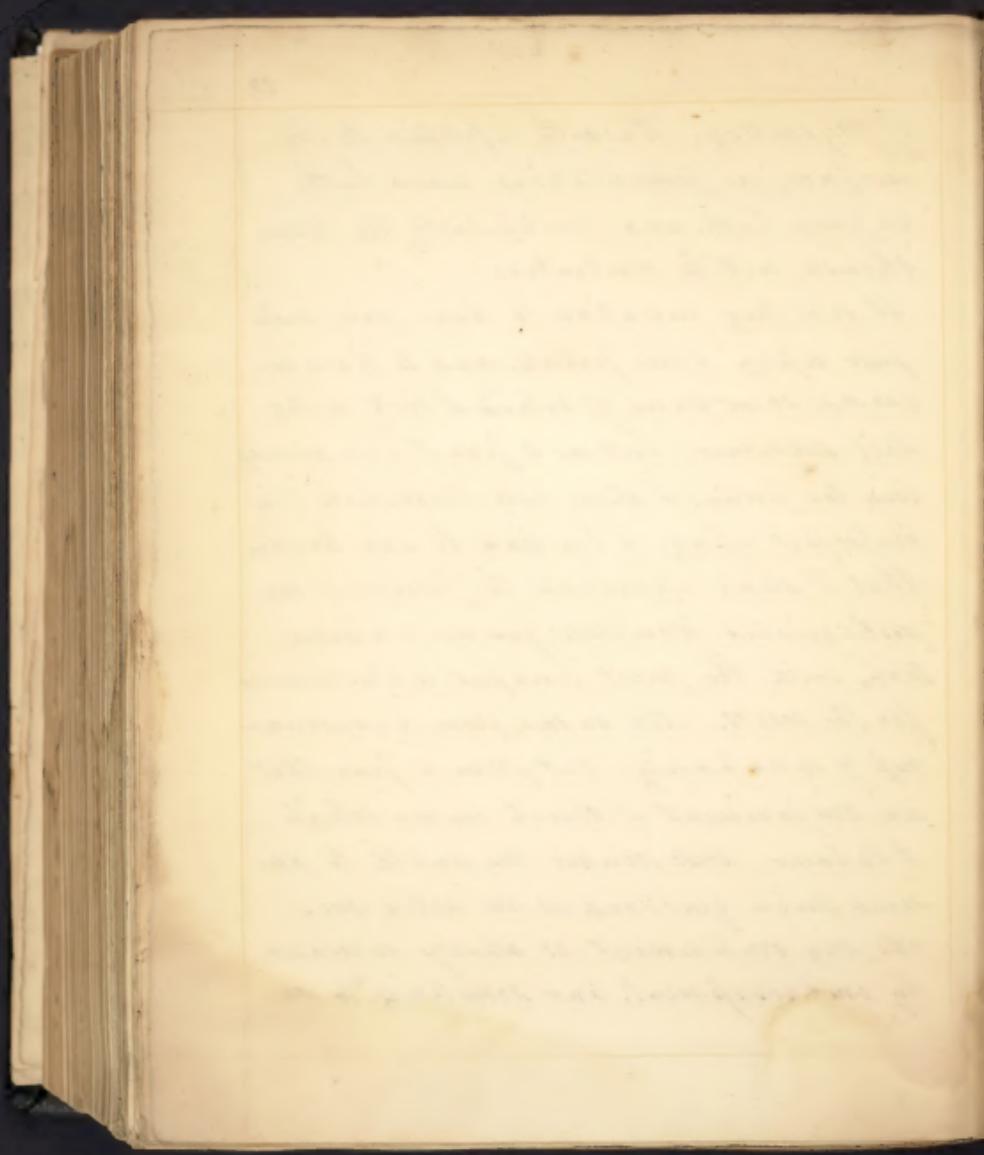


which it recd it in a state which he considered hopeless; but the patient has not taken it more than twice since, except every day, as was told me, without medicine, and the physician advised. The effect was astonishing. The great inflammation seems to be at hand but on subsequent trials its effects were not so violent, and it was freely administered. The dangerous mixture is a valuable preparation of which I have in practice been the sole inventor. There is no oil better, & than elemi, and no animal oil like blubber, & so a common kind substitute for any like epithelio<sup>n</sup> does not do very well. The patient is restored to the usual apace of about two paces of ground, most easily somerset so turned by the physician. Blistering applied to the abdomen are however far superior in the short mount



of dysentery. Warmth applied to the surface, as fomentations, warm bath, vapour bath, and particularly the latter, should not be overlooked.

It was my intention to have been more full upon some points, and to have recorded some cases of which I took notes last summer, but as I fear I have already been too prolix, I shall here terminate this imperfect essay. I beg leave to add, however, that I had approached the presence of my distinguished preceptors for an examination, with the most painful apprehensions for the result. Not indeed, from a consciousness of insipacity, but from a fear that an impediment of speech under which I labour, will render me unable to answer such questions as are asked me. As my impediment is always increased by embarrassment, and sometimes to so



great an extent, as to deprive me of the power  
of articulation, I would most respectfully  
solicit the indulgence of a little time, or  
the privilege of replying in writing to such  
interrogations as may be asked me.—



